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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses first on the educator, Ralph W. Tyler, who serves as a model and ideal for curriculum development and implementation. The paper states that in 1949, Tyler, in creating a syllabus, created a small book of 128 pages, and in so doing, he set a benchmark in the field of education. The paper then provides an extended syllabus for a course on writing for business and the professions at the State University of New York, College at Oneonta. The paper notes that the major goal of COM 240 is the development of fundamental managerial problem-solving and decision-making abilities as these abilities pertain to effective business and professional writing. The syllabus featured in the paper outlines the course aims; what the student will be able to do after completing the course; the standards of effective business communication; and the subject matter of the course. As outlined in the paper, under types of business messages, for instance, the syllabus lists specific forms: routine, unpleasant or negative, selling a product, credit and collections, goodwill, memorandums, press releases, minutes of a meeting, etc. Contains 13 references. (TB)

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Toward curriculum development and implementation: How can classical concepts of an educational theorist be translated into a specific curriculum for a course in *writing for business and the professions*?

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In 1949 Professor Ralph W. Tyler of the University of Chicago sat down to prepare a syllabus for a course in Curriculum Development. As he began to lay out his ideas he found a "rhythm" and a "voice" and became expansive. By the time he had finished, much more than a syllabus had emerged. He had created a small book--128 pages in length--and he had set a benchmark within the field of education. In the course that followed it became clear that the syllabus was the central document of the course--more significant than the textbooks, cases, papers, exercises, and related course materials. In fact, Tyler had created a classical document, providing a unique theoretical contribution to the field of education.

Last year I submitted a paper to this seminar that dealt with the role of values in a course in *Writing for Business and the Professions* with a single concluding reference to the syllabus which I use in teaching that course. Three meaningful notes were given to me by seminar participants that were extremely insightful in terms of the values issues explored in my paper. But the discussion that took place in Minneapolis was almost entirely advisory in terms of my syllabus, which no one had a copy of at that time. I have no illusions that the syllabus that I use on my own idyllic campus of the State University of New York will have any classical impact on the theoretical underpinnings of anything. But it is important to me and to my students, to the futures to which they aspire and embody in terms of their potentialities, and to the quality of their lives both present and future.

There are ways in which my syllabus is consistent with the ideals of Tyler, and others in which it is different. Tanner and Tanner (1980) discuss many forces that were at work leading up to the publication of Tyler's "syllabus"--Dewey's earlier contributions (1902, 1916, 1928, 1929), the

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impact of the Eight-Year Study of the Progressive Education Association (1933-1941), the model developed by Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel (1942), the ideas of Hilda Taba (1945), and the conflicts with the behaviorist movement (Kuhn, 1970). And thereafter a number of theorists have either openly disagreed with Tyler or aspired to move beyond him. References cited in just four sources number several hundred (Kliebard, 1975; Schubert, 1984; Cangelosi, 1988; Joyce, Weil, and Showers, 1992). In spite of all this, the stature of Tyler's developments continue to be acknowledged to this day with his four fundamental questions probably his most lingering legacy:

1. What educational purposes should the school (or course) seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

While Tyler's first question is addressed reasonably well within my syllabus and his third question is covered somewhat, my document is unmistakably incomplete in terms of the other two. But it is a curricular tool which has served me well and which may also have value as a reference source and as a "building block" for others who wish to approach the teaching of this discipline more effectively.

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

> WRITING FOR BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS -- a course in which clear and correct written communication skill is seen as a vital personal asset that is essential to the true business professional. Writing is approached as a fundamental tool for business decision-making.

TEXTBOOKS

Andrews, Deborah C. and Andrews, William D. (1992). Business communication (Second Edition). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
Treece, Malra (1983). Communication for business and the professions (Second Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

MAJOR GOAL

The major goal of COM 240 is the development of fundamental managerial problem-solving and decision-making abilities as these abilities pertain to effective business and professional writing.

I. GENERAL COURSE AIMS

The perceptual and cognitive abilities developed through theory and practice in a course in writing for business and the professions are the following:

A. the ability to distinguish facts from judgment.
B. the ability to recognize levels of abstraction.
C. the ability to draw inferences from evidence or data.
D. the ability to perceive underlying assumptions.
E. the ability to recognize tonal qualities in composition.
F. the ability to draw new conclusions when changes in data warrant new judgments.

II. SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

A. determine the appropriate communication to achieve specific administrative objectives.
B. correctly apply principles of cost effectiveness in communication.
C. apply logic in correctly solving business problems and in making appropriate decisions.
D. recognize and apply the correct processes and principles of effective communication in a broad variety of business applications.
E. identify and apply the correct techniques of business research in the collection, organization, and evaluation of written information and ideas.
F. correctly determine the need for a report, recognize the appropriate problem, and formulate the proper methodology.
G. apply correct writing skills to business letters, memorandums, and short reports.
H. demonstrate correct written communication skills--sentence and paragraph structure, word usage, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
I. recognize and explain the importance of nonverbal communication.

III. STANDARDS OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

A. Clarify (word choice, structure, unity, coherence, transition, specificity, completeness, readability).
B. Courtesy (empathy; you-attitude). The emphasis is on putting the reader into the overall picture.
C. Conciseness (use of short words; selection of words; choosing words that best convey precise meaning; "Write to express, not to impress.")
D. Confidence (positive aspects: confidence in writer, reader, and in message).

III. STANDARDS OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION (Continued)

E. Correctness (verify facts and figures; pay attention to details; this also refers to correct usage of grammar).
F. Conversational tone (style, word usage, jargon, variation; emphasis on elimination of hackneyed expressions of jargon).
G. Mechanics of writing (rules of grammar, sentence construction, paragraphing, punctuation).

IV. SUBJECT MATTER

A. Fundamentals

1. Review of the rules of grammar (nouns, pronouns, verbs, voice, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections).
2. Review of sentences (subject and predicate, complements, phrases, clauses, kinds of sentences, parallelism).
3. Review of mechanics of punctuation (period, comma, question mark, exclamation point, semicolon, colon, dash, parentheses, underlining, quotation marks, capitalization).

B. Business Correspondence

1. Elements of a message presentation
   (a) stationery
   (b) parts
   (c) punctuation
   (d) format

2. Message organization
   (a) effective openings
   (b) effective organization of data/message
   (c) effective closings

3. Types of business messages
   (a) routine (orders, inquiries, requests, favorable replies, claims, adjustments)
   (b) unpleasant or negative (refusing a request, refusing an adjustment)
   (c) selling a product or service
   (d) credit and collections
   (e) employment (application letter, resume, and follow-up letters)
   (f) goodwill
   (g) memorandums
   (h) press releases
   (i) minutes of meetings

IV. SUBJECT MATTER (Continued)

C. Formal Analytical Business Reports

1. Nature and Purpose
   (a) report purpose
   (b) classification of reports

2. Business Report, Research Methodology

   (a) Analyzing, clarifying, and defining the problem to be solved (selecting a topic, narrowing the topic, formulating a thesis statement)

   (b) Gathering information

      (1) Secondary research
         a. evaluation of library material
         b. basic reference sources
         c. steps in finding library information
         d. taking notes
         e. preparing a tentative bibliography
      (2) Primary research
         a. survey research
         b. observation research
         c. experimental research

   (c) Organizing, Composing, and Interpreting Data
      (1) Preparing an outline
      (2) Developing major divisions
         a. Prefatory pages
            (i) Title page
            (ii) Letter of transmittal
            (iii) Table of contents
            (iv) List of tables and/or figures
            (v) Summary/synopsis/precis/abstract
         b. Introduction
            (i) Statement of the problem
            (ii) Background information
            (iii) Purpose of the research
            (iv) Scope and limitations
            (v) Definitions of terms
            (vi) Methodology
         c. Presentation of data
         d. Conclusions (logic, analogy, inference, assumption, drawing valid conclusions based on research)
         e. Recommendations (developing specific courses of action that should be taken to solve the problem)
         f. Bibliography
         g. Appendices (optional)

IV. SUBJECT MATTER (Continued)

C. Formal Analytical Business Reports (continued)

2. Business Report, Research Methodology (continued)

(c) Organizing, Composing, and Interpreting Data (continued)

(3) Composing and Interpreting the Data
a. Readability
b. Sentence construction
c. Emphasis
d. Paragraph development
e. Order of reporting
f. Objectivity (presentation of research in an unbiased style)
g. Documentation (footnotes used to give credit to a source and to expand discussion)

D. Informal Types of Reports
1. Memorandum report
2. Letter report
3. Justification report
4. Progress report

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